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## Tiny and Fragmented Votive Offerings from Classical Antiquity

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## Introduction

This chapter focuses on votive offerings from the ancient Greco-Roman world— objects that were left for the gods in sanctuaries or other sacred places. Votive offerings intersect closely with this volume’s themes: many offerings are tiny (or at least “miniaturized”) representations of larger bodies or objects; in turn, many votives can also be understood as fragments—whether because they are deliberately broken objects, or because they show clear signs of incidental “wear and tear,” or because they represent isolated parts of human bodies such as legs, arms, or heads. The first half of this chapter discusses these different types of votive fragmentation, arguing that such deliberate or accidental fragmentation frequently increased the symbolism and perceived value of the offering in the eyes of both the community and the recipient deity. I also introduce the further possibility that *all* votives might in some sense be seen as fragments, insofar as they constitute part of a worshiper’s property or converted wealth—an idea inherent in the ancient concepts of *dekatē* and *aparchē*.

The second part of this chapter focuses on one particular type of fragmentary votive—the anatomical model—and explores this object-type from the perspective of the miniature. Tiny body parts made in clay and metal began to be dedicated in the Middle Minoan (ca. 2100–1600 BCE) and then the Archaic Greek (ca. 800– 480 BCE) eras, and continued to appear alongside the life-sized (or near life-sized) anatomical votives that were a feature of Hellenistic and Roman ritual. In my discussion of the miniature anatomicals, I explore some of the possible resonances of these votives’ tiny sizes, focusing in particular on the ways in which these objects facilitate, or even demand, intimate touch and handling. I suggest that the act of touching the votives—whether this was performed, remembered, or simply *imagined*—had a special valency in the sphere of healing, in which divine touch often played a central therapeutic role. More generally, I suggest that such real or imagined touch could also imprint the votive with a sort of “sensory memory,” enhancing its ability to function as an indexical trace of the person who dedicated it [3]. Finally, I raise the possibility that the miniature votives in Hellenistic and Roman times may have harkened back to the tiny votives of earlier periods, thus enabling the votive to function not only as a token of thanks or hope but also as a tool of cultural memory.

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## Fragmented

### *“Meaningful Wear and Tear”*

Votive offerings were gifts to the gods and, as such, it might seem an unlikely proposition that part of their value was sometimes in their being broken or incomplete in some way.

However, when we look at the literary and archaeological evidence, we find several different ways in which the value of a votive might be enhanced, rather than compromised, by its deliberate or accidental fragmentation. Consider the following epigram from the *Greek Anthology* (an assortment of Hellenistic and later Greek epigrams arranged into thematic books, which include 358 short accounts of votive dedications):

*This bossed fragment (truphos) of his shield, which, when fighting gloriously, he held on his left arm, did Nikagoras dedicate to Zeus; but all the rest of it the darts and stones as thick as hail and the edges of the sword cut away. Yet though thus hacked all round in his martial hand it was preserved by Nikagoras and preserved Nikagoras* (6.84) [4].

This is one of several poems in the *Anthology* that commemorate the dedication of a weapon used in battle [5]. As with most other dedications described in the collection, we cannot know whether this weapon—or its dedicant—ever existed in real life, or whether this was an entirely fictional literary scenario; nevertheless, the poem immediately alerts us to one way in which physical damage to an offering might enrich and ennoble it in the eyes of the deity, by allowing the object to refer beyond itself to exceptional events in the dedicant's past. This particular epigram begins with the image of a fragment (*truphos*—literally “that which is broken off”), a physical relic then used to conjure up a vivid image of the battle. We are given a glimpse of the dedicant Nikagoras standing in the midst of the enemy with the shield on his left arm, dodging “darts and stones” and tensing his body against the blows from enemy swords. This brief ekphrasis shows how the dedication of the battered shield exceeds its simple material value, introducing the notion that the battle itself and Nikagoras's acts of bravery were also encompassed in the dedication.

Several other epigrams in the collection also invoke fragmentation: one epigram attributed to Simonides (6.52) addresses a spear whose point is “old and worn (*tetrusai*),” while another poem by Paulus Silentius commemorates a “half-eaten” (*hemibrōti*) lance-head (6.57). Another epigram records the dedication of weapons that were whole, polished, and perfect; however, these are the proverbial exceptions that prove the rule, for the *absence* of fragmentation here makes them “disgraceful” choices of gift for the god of war:

*What mortal hung here on the wall these spoils in which it were disgraceful for Ares to take delight? Here are set no jagged spears, no plumeless helmet, no shield stained with blood; but all are so polished, so undinted by the steel, as they were spoils of the dance and not of the battle.* (6.163)

These examples and several others in the *Anthology* constitute a clear strand within the ancient discourse on votive offerings, which inverts our usual assumptions about the value placed on the “broken” and the “whole.” The gods are described as “taking delight” in breakages and fragments, and as being disappointed or even disgusted by offerings that are whole. Neither is this restricted to weaponry—we find several epigrams commemorating the dedication of fishing nets, in which the poet emphasizes their tatty appearance: 6.23 is a prayer beseeching Hermes to accept “this fragment (*leipsanon*) of the great [net] worn by the sea and scraped often by the rough beach,” while 6.24 describes the dedication by Heliodoros of a net that has been “worn out” (*triben*) in vain (due to his lack of a successful catch). One husbandman dedicates first fruits of corn, but aspires to return with the offering of a sickle “blunted” (*amblu*) by reaping (6.36). Meanwhile, Philodemos the craftsman offers his pens, which the poet comments are “blackened at the point” (6.64).

Within the logic of the *Greek Anthology*, then, fragmented and worn items were seen as unique, noble offerings that reflect the occupations (and frequently the tired, worn-out

bodies) of their dedicants. At the same time, votives that had not been used (and that had not been manufactured especially for the purposes of dedication) symbolized an absence or superficiality of meaning. How far might this logic be applied to the real, lived practices of dedicating votive offerings? The epigrams cannot be taken as simple documentary sources for real-life objects (see Bing 1998; Gutzwiller 1998, 47–114), but it seems reasonable to suppose that any dedication of a personal belonging—whether weaponry, jewelry, utensils, or tools, to name some of the examples commonly found by archaeologists—would be enriched by the physical traces of the object’s biography prior to its dedication (Hughes 2017a). Many artifacts found in sanctuaries demonstrate some signs of physical wear and tear, and although it is difficult to know whether this occurred before deposition, rather than during, say, burial or excavation, the epigrams discussed here do alert us to the possibility that physical damage sometimes contributed to these objects’ original value as dedications.

### ***Deliberate Breakage***

Such incidental fragmentation acquired over the course of an object’s life is clearly quite different from the deliberate breakage of objects that occurs at, or shortly before, the moment of dedication. In recent years, the intentional fragmentation of artifacts has been given a good deal of attention by anthropologists and archaeologists, partly in response to John Chapman’s pioneering studies of fragmentation and the powerful explanatory model of “enchainment” (Chapman 2000; see also Fowler 2004). These sorts of deliberate breakage are conceptually very different from the “meaningful wear and tear” that we hear about in the Greek epigrams, and are less commonly observed in relation to votives, in comparison with other types of objects such as funerary artifacts. However, some votive examples have been tentatively identified. Ian Ferris, for instance, has suggested that certain broken figurines from Italy, France, and Britain may have been deliberately fragmented in association with a request for divine healing (Ferris 2012, 61–64; see also Evans 2000, 299–302, for a similar interpretation of broken pipe-clay figurines from Caerlon). In such a scenario, the dedicant would select a whole figurine and break it in such a way as to isolate a single part, which corresponds to the suffering part of their body. The resulting fragmentary limbs, heads, or torsos would thus have a close conceptual relationship with the tailor-made “anatomical votives” more familiar to classical archaeologists; however, the process of breaking would add an extra dynamic and performative element to the ritual, allowing the figurine to embody or represent the temporal movement from health (in the form of the whole figurine) to sickness (in which one part of the body “takes over” from all the others and becomes a disproportionately salient feature of the somato-sensory experience). Further possible examples of such healing-related breakage have been identified in Matthew Fittock’s 2015 paper on pipe-clay figurines from Roman London, where he performs a fragmentation analysis on sixty-eight first- and second-century CE Venus figurines from a variety of archaeological contexts across the settlement. After discussing the range of possible motives for these figurines’ disposal (and noting that any structured ritual deposition probably occurred in a private religious context, given the fact that most of the figurines did not come from known temple sites), Fittock raises the possibility that “the prominence of mid-to-lower Venus figurine fragments from London could be inherently connected with the iconography of the goddess and reflect a healing or fertility ritual whereby the broken parts represent areas of the body requiring

the care of the gods, or some alternative practice associated with encouraging the economic and social prosperity of the settlement” (Fittock 2015, 128).

Other instances of apparently deliberate fragmentation have been noted in votive contexts in Italy. Excavations at the sanctuary of Monte Li Santi-Le Rote at Narce in the Ager Faliscus demonstrate some of the complexities that mark the interpretation of these broken finds. The Narce sanctuary, which appears to have been sacred to Demeter, was in use from the fifth century BCE until the end of the second century or early first century BCE, undergoing a series of modulations in the architecture and performance of ritual (as inferred through an examination of the finds—see De Lucia Brolli and Tabolli 2015).

The excavations at the site have uncovered a suite of fascinating dedications, including a series of more than three hundred terracotta masks that were deposited in an open-air enclosure over the course of the third century BCE (De Lucia Brolli and Tabolli 2015, 171–77). For our purposes, the most pertinent finds come from the very last stages of the sanctuary’s life in the early first century BCE, in the context of a ritual that appears to mark the conscious “closure” of the sacred space. In a pit at the corner of the enclosure, two iron spits (*obeloi*) were laid down, one of which had been folded over so as to become nonfunctional. Around these were arranged a series of iron keys of different scales, and on the top of this arrangement a fragmentary figurine was positioned, which the excavators interpret as having been broken during the ritual (figure 3.1). As such, they link the destruction of this figurine to a ritual of ceremonial closure of the sanctuary—a theory that also would neatly match the symbolism of the keys, and perhaps also the bending of the iron spit.



*Figure 3.1 - Broken figurine of the Tanagra type from the excavations at Narce. Early first century BCE.*

*Photo courtesy of Jacopo Tabolli.*

Although this layer of the Narce finds may not be “votive” in the conventional sense of the term, it does serve as a potent example of how votive offerings can have their meaning shaped by associated acts of fragmentation. In this instance, the deposition of a single fragmented figurine was able to transform the significance of the hundreds of other votive objects that had already been dedicated within the sanctuary, retrospectively shifting their status from objects belonging to a dynamic and ongoing cult to fossilized symbols of an outmoded ritual tradition.

### ***Tithes and First Fruits as Fragments***

Spears and fishing nets can be worn down with use and age, and clay figurines can be deliberately broken. However, there are also more oblique ways in which votives might be seen as fragments. Figure 3.2 shows a bronze ceremonial axe head that was discovered at the site of San Sosti in Calabria at the end of the nineteenth century. The axe dates from around 520 BCE, and is thought to have been made in the nearby city of Sybaris.



Figure 3.2 Bronze ceremonial shaft-hole axe head, inscribed with a dedication to Hera. Ca. 520 BCE. From San Sosti, Calabria. 16.5 cm × 8.8 cm. London, British Museum 1884,0614.31.

The handle bears a relief with the frontal depiction of a sphinx, while the blade is inscribed with a seven-line dedication in Greek that translates to “I am the sacred property of Hera-in-the-Plain: Kyniskos the butcher dedicated me, a tithe from his works.” The axe thus proclaims its own status as a votive offering to the goddess Hera; however, with the word *dekatē* (“tithe”) it also explicitly gestures toward its status as a fragment subtracted from the overall wealth of its owner (specifically a “tenth portion” of a specific form of income—see Rouse [1902, 39–94]; Isager and Skydsgeard [2013, 169–74]). The concept of the tithe was central to ancient votive economics; in the present context, its significance is that it can

extend the relevance of fragmentation to dedicated objects that are physically intact—but that nevertheless retain the memory of the larger wholes from which they have been subtracted. Similar ideas are inherent in the word *aparchē* (“first fruit”), which is often used synonymously with *dekatē*, but which applies principally to offerings resulting from organic growth, such as crops, and also to human hair dedicated on the occasion of the first cut or shave (Rouse 1902; Draycott 2016) [6]. In these instances, the cut, shaven, plucked, or picked appearance of the offering would simply underscore its status as a portion of a larger whole that continued to exist (and in many cases, to grow) away from the sanctuary.

### **Model Fragments**

A further type of fragmentation involves artifacts that are not themselves broken, or even separated from larger entities, but that have been deliberately manufactured to *represent* fragments of a larger whole. Votives of this type include the models of human body parts that were dedicated in sanctuaries across the ancient world from at least the Middle Minoan period until the Roman imperial era (ca. 2000 BCE–200 CE; see van Straten 1981; Hughes 2017a) or later. These “anatomical” votives are conventionally associated with personal crises of illness and healing : an individual fell ill and dedicated a model of the sick part of the body in a temple as a request for divine healing; alternatively, he or she made a vow that was later fulfilled by the dedication of the votive, after the real body part had been healed. Anatomical votives focused the deity’s attention on the part of the body that needed attention; however, as the fourth-century BCE relief reproduced in figure 3.3 makes clear, these objects could simultaneously be read as depicting the fragmentation of the dedicant’s body. This marble relief was left in the sanctuary of Asklepios in Athens at some point during the fourth century BCE: it depicts a female worshiper kneeling before a statue (perhaps of Herakles) in front of a wall hung with a jigsaw of anatomical votives, which significantly echo and “remake” the form of the woman’s body.



Figure 3.3 Marble votive relief from the Asklepieion at Athens showing a woman kneeling in front of a cult statue with votive body parts suspended behind her. Fourth century bce. Athens, Acropolis Museum 7232. Ht. 16 cm.

Recent studies of anatomical votives have outlined some of the functions and meanings of the fragmentation that these objects embody. The form of the anatomical votive has been seen as a device to contain as well as localize the illness (Ryneerson 2003), as well as a means for the patient to regain control over his or her sick body (Petsalis-Diomidis 2006). In

my 2008 article on “Fragmentation as Metaphor,” I argued that the anatomical votives might also be seen to dramatize aspects of the dystopian experience of illness, as well as the ancient discourse that equated healing with wholeness and reintegration (Hughes 2008) [7]. More recently, Emma-Jayne Graham has explored the power of anatomical votives to act as vehicles of enchainment and partible personhood which helped to bind the dedicant into reciprocal relationships with the deity, as well as with the community at large (Graham 2016) [8]. Graham suggests that the popularity of anatomical votives in Republican Italy might be linked to contemporary social and political developments, which “created a greater need to redefine and articulate personal and community identities . . . and which stressed the reciprocal balance between the world of humans and that of the divine during a period of potentially momentous upheaval” (2016, 61). Contrasting the composite bodies produced by the anatomical votive assemblages with “full” figurines or votive statuettes, Graham draws our attention to the capacity of anatomical votives to break down conventional boundaries between bodies and persons to produce images of close-knit religious communities.

The fragmentation embodied by the anatomical votives was clearly multivalent, and while some symbolic qualities (such as the representation of illness) may have resonated across the ancient world, others were more intimately connected with specific local ways of seeing and treating the body. Striking examples can be seen in figures 3.4 and 3.5, which show two artifacts found in sanctuaries in Gaul. In figure 3.4, we see a wooden sculpture representing three heads stacked vertically, which was left in the sanctuary of Dea Sequana at the source of the Seine in Burgundy (Deyts 1994; Green 1999; Armit 2012, 104–105 and 115–17) around the beginning of the first century ce. In figure 3.5, we see a much earlier relief sculpture showing another vertical arrangement of human heads, this time from the sanctuary of Entremont in Provence (Armit 2010, 93–94).



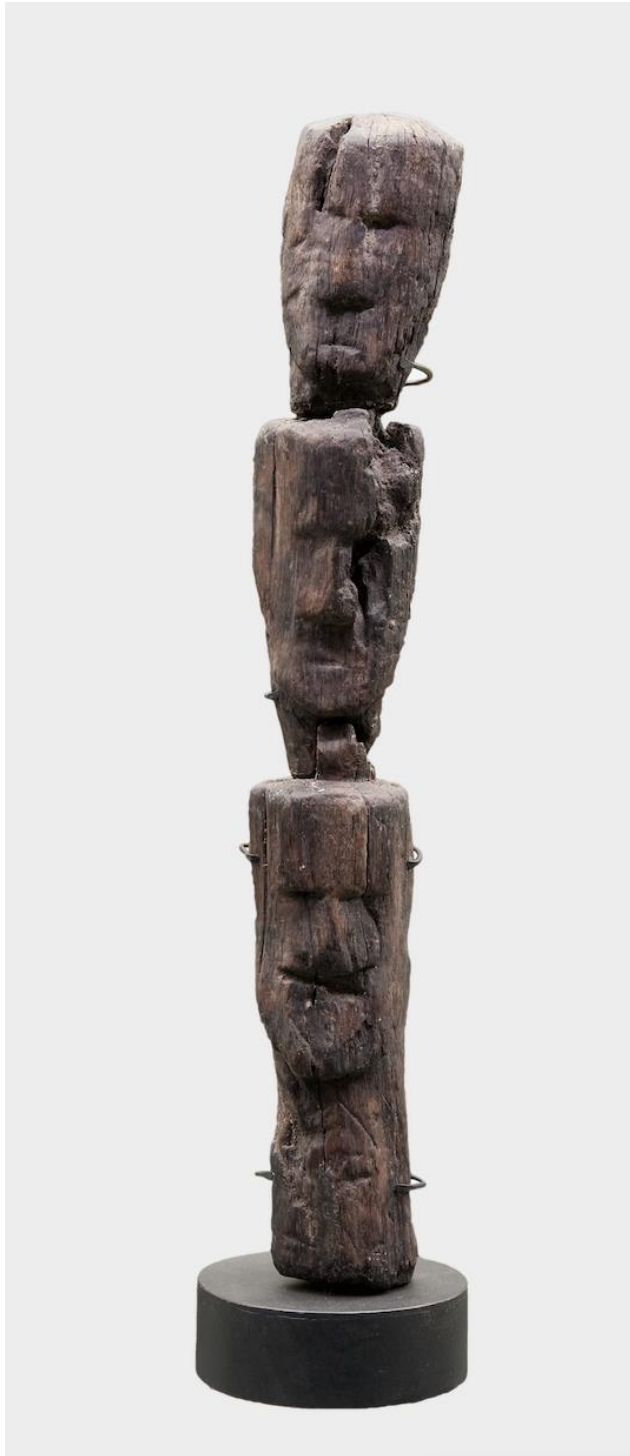


Figure 3.4 Stacked wooden heads from the sanctuary at the source of the Seine. Ca. early first century CE. 70 × 10 × 8 cm. Dijon Archaeological Museum 75.2.80.  
Photo by François Perrodin, used with the kind permission of Dijon Archaeological Museum.

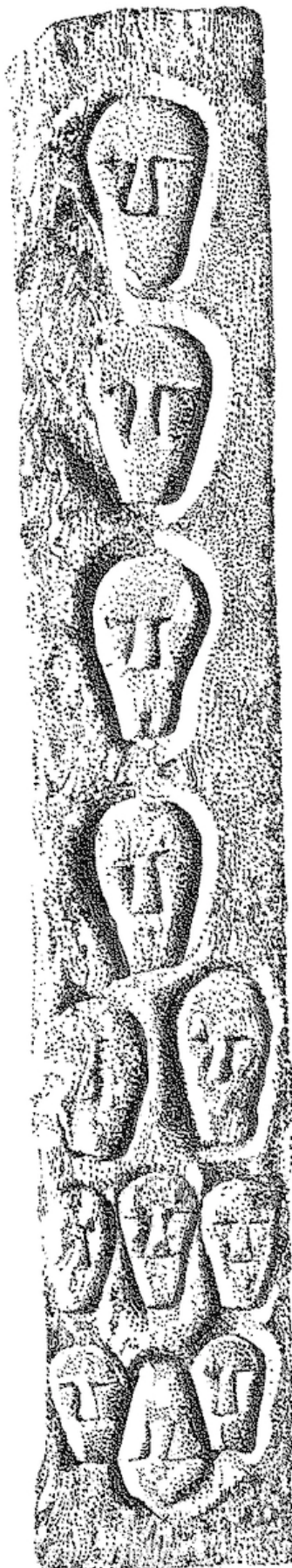


Figure 3.5 Drawing of decorated side of head pillar from Entremont. Ca. 500 BCE (date contested). Ht. 2.58 m.

Drawing by Libby Mulqueeny, used with the kind permission of Ian Armit.

The visual similarities between the two sculptures belie the significant contextual differences between them. The wooden heads shown in figure 3.4 were dedicated at a spring sanctuary alongside hundreds of other wooden, marble, and metal body parts, and are conventionally interpreted as anatomical votives associated with requests for healing, as part of a ritual brought to Gaul by incoming Romans (Woolf 1998, 218; Hughes 2017a). Instead, the much older monumental stone relief sculpture in figure 3.5 is thought to be associated with indigenous practices of collecting, curating, and representing the severed heads of enemies and ancestors (Armit 2012). The juxtaposition of the two sculptures shows how far the later wooden votive heads reflected local traditions of visual representation, but it also raises the possibility that these wooden anatomicals may have embodied some culturally specific resonances and memories that distinguished them from anatomicals in other parts of the ancient world—resonances which were not necessarily consistent with a healing function. For instance, the wooden votive heads may have had atavistic associations with internecine or interpersonal conflict, and thus have a similar function to the contemporary Roman *defixiones* (curses) found in the vicinity of these Gallo-Roman anatomicals (Romeuf and Dumontet 2000, 40). Such interpretations can only ever be speculative, but at the very least, the objects shown in figures 3.4 and 3.5 force us to acknowledge that the visual fragmentation of the body in anatomical votives was a culturally conditioned act, which reflected the particular divisions and classifications that had historically been applied to the body in any one location.

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## Tiny

### ***Variations in Scale of Model Body Parts***

All anatomical votives are fragments, but only some are tiny [9]. And in part, it is this variety in size that makes anatomical votives a particularly good case study for exploring the effects of miniaturization in sacred spaces. Very few studies have addressed the effects of scale on votive body parts, which is perhaps because miniature models—those which are significantly smaller than life size—are relatively few in number and are generally less well-known than the later, larger examples. The theme of miniaturization has, however, been explored in some detail in relation to other types of votive offering, and these works have given important pointers for an analysis of sizes of anatomical votives (e.g., Kiernan 2009; Smith and Bergeron 2011; Foxhall 2015).

One study of votive body parts that does give serious consideration to the issue of scale is Alexia Petsalis-Diomidis's recent book chapter "Between the Body and the Divine: Healing Votives from Classical and Hellenistic Greece" (Petsalis-Diomidis 2016). Here the anatomicals appear as part of a broader discussion of scale in the ancient healing sanctuary, alongside colossal cult statues and figural relief sculptures that use scale as a tool to create explicit hierarchies between (larger) divine and (smaller) mortal bodies. Petsalis-Diomidis also draws attention to the different scales and sizes of anatomical votives that appear within single assemblages; at the sanctuary of Asklepios at Corinth, for example, we find a

variety of sizes ranging “from the largest leg, which is more than three feet long, to the smallest, which measures less than five inches” (Petsalis-Diomidis 2016, 61). She demonstrates that such variations in scale work in tandem with the fragmentary form of the votives to emphasize the sense of disorientation that may have been experienced by the pilgrim, as well as to mirror the process of bodily transformation that was the ultimate goal of the healing pilgrimage. In addition, she points out how “miniaturizing the pilgrim’s entire body may have offered a sense of control and distance over the sick body to be healed, while the use of small scale in proportion to the god may have emphasized the power of the god over the pilgrim’s body both for the dedicant and subsequent pilgrim viewers” (2016, 60). Petsalis-Diomidis has thus shown that miniature anatomical votives could have a multiplicity of meanings, and that each example needs to be considered in the light of other associated objects and bodies for its full impact to be appreciated. Her study also alerts us to the effects that variations in scale would have on the viewer.

Similar variety in size and scale can be found at other sanctuaries with anatomicals. At the Athens Asklepieion, the only surviving anatomical votives from the Classical period are marble reliefs depicting breasts and eyes at near life size (Forsén 1996, 1.1–1.3, with scale at figs. 4 and 6). However, we find possible traces of differently sized votives preserved in other sources from this sanctuary. The votives depicted in the relief in figure 3.3 are insistently life size (although this may reflect the sculptor’s intent to emphasize the similarities of the votives and the female body in the relief, rather than the size of real votives in the sanctuary). Meanwhile, hundreds of metal anatomicals are recorded in the Asklepieion inventory inscriptions, which were compiled not long before 275 BCE, and which provide a record of votives dedicated in the sanctuary over the fourth and third centuries (*IG II2* 1532–39; Van Straten 1981, 108–13; Aleshire 1989, 1991). Although the dimensions of the metal body parts are not recorded in the inscriptions, we might reasonably assume they were small in size, in comparison with both earlier and later metal body parts—which are virtually all miniatures—but also because the inventory inscription mentions that some of these Athenian votives actually lay in the hand of the cult statue (*IG II2* 1534 A.125–127). At the Athens Asklepieion, then, we find another juxtaposition of anatomical votives represented at different scales, with some interesting correspondences of size, material, and mode of display. The miniature metals were hung around the interior of the temple, and this proximity to the cult statue may have been one of the factors that motivated a worshiper to choose this type of offering (as opposed to, say, a larger inscribed marble relief that was likely to be erected outside in the temple precinct; Forsén 1996, fig. 3). Other juxtapositions of different-scale votives can be found farther afield: at the sanctuary of Dea Sequana in Gaul, for instance, the 70-centimeter-tall stack of heads shown in figure 3.4 was found alongside other large three-dimensional and relief sculptures in marble and limestone—including a 50-centimeter-tall torso (Deyts 1994, pl. 27.1), a 39-centimeter-long relief of a hand and wrist (Deyts 1994, pl. 36.10), and a foot with a sole length of 16 centimeters—as well as a large number of much smaller bronze plaques. The 5-centimeter-high torso shown in figure 3.6 was found along with approximately one hundred and twenty formally similar bronze plaques representing torsos, pelvises, legs, breasts, and pairs of eyes, and measuring 4–9 centimeters wide and 2–5 centimeters tall (Deyts 1994, 121).<sup>10</sup> The votive assemblage at Sequana sanctuary was thus made up of many differently sized bodies, from the 2 by 4 centimeter “palm-held” bronze anatomical plaques, to the larger wooden and stone models of body parts that required two hands to lift and carry, to the

full-body stone “pilgrim” figures that could reach life size or even larger (cf. Deyts 1994, pl. 3.5).



Figure 3.6 Bronze plaque showing female trunk, from the Seine sanctuary. 5.1 × 2.2 cm. Dijon Archaeological Museum 2012.0.117.

Photo by François Perrodin, used with kind permission of Dijon Archaeological Museum.

### ***Miniature Meanings***

What factors might lead a person to choose one size of anatomical votive over another? What were the particular meanings and qualities of the miniature—besides the themes of transformation, power, and control which have already been identified? Philip Kiernan and others have rightly warned against our assumptions that miniature votives need to have consistent and homogeneous functions (Kiernan 2009, 1), and this expectation of diversity needs to form the basis of any discussion of miniature anatomicals as well. Sometimes the reasons for selecting a miniature votive may have been largely practical. At remote sanctuaries where the emphasis was on pilgrimage and travel, for instance, the miniature offering may have offered a conveniently lightweight alternative to larger and heavier votives made from bigger pieces of limestone or marble. At many sanctuaries we also see strong correlations between the size of an offering and the material in which it is made. At

the Archaic temple of Artemis in Ephesos, for example, offerings were made from precious materials like ivory, gold, or electrum, and the expense and availability of these materials may have imposed a natural constraint on the finished votive's shape and size (figure 3.7; Hogarth 1908).



Figure 3.7 Miniature body parts from the sanctuary of Artemis at Ephesos. Ca. 700 bce. London, British Museum 1907,1201.22.

At this point, it is worth noting that most of our surviving tiny anatomicals come from early periods of classical antiquity. In addition to these Ephesian miniatures, the majority of extant miniatures from Italy are from the Archaic period and thus predate the huge numbers of life-sized (or near life-sized) terracottas that were dedicated in the Hellenistic/Republican period (Turfa 2005). And the earliest known votive body parts from anywhere in the ancient world are the tiny clay limbs from Middle Minoan sanctuaries on Crete, such as Petsofa (Myres 1902–03) and Mount Juktas (Nilsson 1927, 74–76). It is also significant that no large-scale body parts are known for the period *before* the late fifth or early fourth centuries bce, which is when the sanctuary of Asklepios at Corinth began to receive its life-sized clay models. Although we do find a limited number of miniature anatomicals in later periods (see figure 3.6 and figure 3.8), we can nevertheless trace a general development over time from small models to large ones.<sup>11</sup>

This association of tininess with the archaic is interesting for at least three reasons. First, it brings up the question of why the early anatomical representations were small—was this linked to contemporary craft traditions, or to sanctuary economics, or to idealistic notions about the proper way of depicting the (human) body in a sacred context? Second, it raises the connected question of why votives “grew” bigger after the Classical period—did the larger size of these later body parts reflect changing conceptions of the relationships between gods and men, or emergent late Classical ideas about beauty and proportion (on which see Squire 2011, 250–51)? Third, it alerts us to the possibility that miniature body parts dedicated in later times (e.g., figure 3.6 and figure 3.8) may have been deliberately archaizing, with their smallness being used as a device to harken back to the miniature body parts of earlier periods [12]. This last point recalls some of the theoretical work that has been done on miniatures in other periods, which also associates tininess with times past. Some of this work has focused on the “natural” associations between miniatures and childhood, which arise both from the ludic potential of the miniature object (Bachelard [1958] 1969, 149), and from the fact that the size of the miniature often recalls the real or imagined size of our younger selves (Stewart [1993] 2007, 44).<sup>13</sup> In turn, Susan Stewart and others have commented on the miniature’s associations with nostalgia for earlier historical periods, and although this is generally specified as pre-industrialized Europe, the move that we see in antiquity from tiny votive offerings to large ones suggests that people in the Greco-Roman world may have made similar links between miniaturization, nostalgia, and archaism.

Another broad theme arising from work on miniaturization is that of physical touch, and this too may be relevant to the tiny body parts discussed here. Doug Bailey and Stephanie Langin-Hooper are among those scholars who have noted the power of the miniature to invite physical intimacy, and to seduce the viewer into a real or imagined handling (Bailey 2005; Langin-Hooper 2015). As Langin-Hooper notes, a miniature’s “small size and delicacy draw in the viewer, encouraging inspection of intricate details” (2015, 62). She then articulates a contrast between very tiny miniatures and those that are slightly larger, the latter group being composed of objects that “endearingly conform in size to the human hand’s ability to grasp easily—provoking intrigued awe, as well as comforting familiarity, at the notion that a small-scale world could exist literally at one’s fingertips” (2015, 62). Most of the miniature votive body parts from classical antiquity conform to Langin-Hooper’s category of “slightly larger miniatures,” in that they can be comfortably grasped and manipulated in the hand (as opposed to being so tiny that they become difficult to pick up). The Ephesos miniatures shown in figure 3.7 are among the smallest examples, measuring around 2–3 centimeters. The Middle Minoan terracottas from Petsofa in the Fitzwilliam Museum are slightly larger—from 3.9 centimeters for a head (GR.160.1907) to 8.4 centimeters for an arm (GR.156.1907), while some of the northern Italian bronze legs measure as large as 10 centimeters (e.g., Turfa 2005, no. 9). Significantly, the votives within any one assemblage tend to converge toward an average size: in figure 3.7, for instance, the eyes paradoxically become “miniature giants,” equal in length to the arm and leg placed beside them in the photograph. This standardization might well be taken as evidence that the handheld scale was seen as the ideal size for a votive, regardless of the body’s “true” proportions.

Many of the votive miniatures were also highly decorative, and these decorative elements further underlined their tactile qualities. Several three-dimensional bronze legs from fifth-century bce deposits in northern Italy are topped with minutely carved bird finials (Turfa 2005, nos. 1, 2, 4, 8, and 11), while the two-dimensional bronze plaques from Italy and France often bear tiny, braille-like dots (the stamped *bronzetti* from Villa di Villa are good examples of this; see Maioli and Mastrocinque 1992). The bronze leg in figure 3.8 is decorated with a long raised line that can be traced with a fingertip as it winds around the length of the limb to end in a pendant-like shape at the ankle. The bronze chain attached to this object may also indicate that it was designed to be attached to a larger entity—perhaps to the dedicant’s own ankle or body, or even to the cult statue.

Another miniature ivory foot from among the Ephesos votives has an incised cross in the otherwise smooth surface of the ankle (Hogarth 1908, 107). Together with the handheld scale, each of these decorative features invited the viewer to touch the object—or to *want to touch*, if physical contact was not permitted or possible. Meanwhile, particularly tiny or virtuoso pieces may also have incited feelings of wonder or curiosity, calling to mind the lingering, transformative touch of the craftsman who had brought the object into being. It is difficult to know precisely how the tactile qualities of these miniature body parts shaped their use-value for worshipers in classical antiquity, particularly given our limited knowledge of the various rituals and practices associated with the objects’ dedication. At the very least, however, we might suppose that the real or imagined touching of the votives intensified the relationship between object and owner (as well object and creator). Other writers have made similar comments about votives in later periods; for instance, Donald Preziosi and Claire Farago note how “Ex-votos were (and still are) objects most frequently made of silver or wax, offered to the di- vine as a request for aid or as thanks for divine help received. The preferred medium itself carries powerful associations of identity due not to an artist’s workmanship but to the trace of actual physical contact directly embedded in it” (Preziosi and Farago 2012, 102). The concept of indexicality becomes particularly relevant here, insofar as an indexical sign “refers to its object not so much because of any simi- larity or analogy with it . . . as because it is in dynamical connection both with the individual object, and with the senses or memory of the person for whom it serves as a sign” (Peirce [1902] 1955, 107; see also chapter 5, this volume). Although it is not only miniature votives that invite real and imagined touching, the handheld and decorative qualities of the tiny votives do bring the theme of tactile contact to the foreground. It is also worth noting that votives that are life size in comparison to *human* bodies themselves become miniature when seen in relation to the divine body, which is frequently depicted as “larger than life” (as already discussed in Petsalis-Diomidis 2016).

This last point reminds us that another potential handler of the votives—in addition to the craftsman and dedicant—was the deity himself or herself. Did ancient worshipers ever imagine the god handling the votive that they had left in the sanctuary, which had such a close connection with their own afflicted body? Divine touch certainly plays a central role in the Classical and Hellenistic discourse on healing, as shown by the sculpted reliefs from sanctuaries of Asklepios, which depict the god touching or even massaging the body of a sleeping patient (cf. Piraeus Archaeological Museum 405, ca. 400 bce). Touch also features prominently in the *iamata*—the fourth-century BCE dream narratives inscribed on stone at the sanc- tuary of Asklepios at Epidauros, where we read of Asklepios stretching out a



patient's paralyzed fingers (LiDonnici 1995, A3), touching a woman to make her pregnant (B11), and opening another man's mouth with his hand (C23), to choose just three examples of stories featuring a healing touch. Literary descriptions of votives in sanctuaries also hint at the perceived benefits of contact with, or proximity to, the divine body: Pausanias in the second century CE writes of a statue of Hygeia that "one cannot see easily because it is so surrounded with the locks of women, who cut them off and offer them to the goddess, and with strips of Babylonian raiment" (*Description of Greece* 2.11.6), while his contemporary Lucian describes a statue to which coins and silver plate had been attached with wax, as thank-offerings from people whom the statue had cured of fever (*Philopseudes* 16). Alongside these other images of divine touch, then, the tactile qualities of our miniature anatomicals take on a possible additional meaning—as objects that "worked" partly through inviting (or evoking) divine touch, and its power to soothe the living mortal body that the votive represented [14].

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## Conclusion

This chapter has offered some reflections on how the themes of the "tiny" and the "fragmented" relate to votive offerings from ancient Greece and Rome. In exploring the tiny, I have focused on the example of anatomical votives, considering the implications of representing bodies on a miniature scale, and the relationship between miniaturization and ideas about tradition and healing. In treating the fragmented, I have placed the models of body parts alongside other "modes" of votive fragmentation: naturally worn and deliberately broken offerings, as well as tithes and first fruits. Many other types of votive might also productively be considered as fragments of larger wholes. For example, Zainab Bahrani draws our attention to ancient Near Eastern stones that were deliberately left unfinished, including tiny fragments of lapis lazuli inscribed with votive texts to the gods of Babylonia (Bahrani 2015). Stones, both worked and unworked, were also left as offerings in ancient Greco-Roman sanctuaries, and part of these objects' value may have derived from an awareness that these were fragments chipped or hewn from a much larger organic mass.<sup>15</sup> In such cases, the placing of the fragmented stone in the sanctuary would have created poignant links between the sanctuary and the stone's distant origin, as well as carrying into the sacred space "the weight of memories of a place and time" (Plate 2014, 32).

As the other chapters in this volume demonstrate, the meanings of tiny or fragmented artifacts far exceed their "incomplete" quality. Nonetheless, it is hard to argue against the hypothesis that each one of these artifacts derives much of its power from its continuous beckoning toward the idea of a larger whole. In the case of votive offerings, we have observed several different ways in which this partial appearance can make an object more meaningful—for instance, by giving it a valuable nostalgic quality or by evoking the bodily breakdown that was central to the experience of sickness and healing. The partial qualities of these tiny and fragmented votives also mean that they are particularly successful at evoking the absent dedicant and at prolonging the interaction between deity and mortal, once the latter has left the sanctuary. In these cases, the "incomplete" nature of the votive requires the deity to participate in a rather complex cognitive process, which involves first acknowledging the incomplete nature of the object and then extrapolating (or imagining) the absent "whole" that the object represents—whether this is the other nine-tenths of

wealth represented by a tithe, or an act of bravery in war, or simply a sick and suffering body. In addition to helping us understand the richness of individual votive objects, then, the themes of tiny and fragmented also help us to access some of the implicit assumptions that ancient dedicants made about divine cognition, omniscience, and memory—underlining the power of the ancient gods to reconstruct matters of colossal personal importance from even the tiniest of objects.

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## Notes

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2. For general studies and bibliography on ancient votives, see the entries under “Dedications” in Balty et al. 2005. Osborne (2004) is a useful account of the historiography of votives and the difficulties of interpreting archaeological assemblages.
3. Simply put, an indexical object “carries with it something of the other of which it is a trace” (Wickstead 2013, 553, with further bibliography). Previous discussions linking votives and indexicality include Preziosi and Farago (2012, 102–105), Braddock (2013) and Jacobs (2013, 40, 129, and 198). Christopher Wood (2011, 223) adds nuance to the link by noting: “The wax *ex voto* exerts a similar pull and fascination by virtue of its indexicality: or rather, its *rhetoric* of indexicality, for the wax limb was not in fact cast from a real limb.”
4. Attributed to Paulus Silentarius. All translations of the *Greek Anthology* epigrams are from the Loeb Classical Library.
5. *Greek Anthology* 6.81, 85–86, 122–24, 141, 159, 264.
6. Isager and Skydsgaard (2013, 169–70).
7. Fragmentation as a metaphor for illness can be found in certain Classical-era texts that present the body-in-pain as a list of separate parts, such as Thucydides’s famous description of the Athenian plague of 430 BCE (*Histories* 2.49) or the Hippocratic text *Epidemics* (e.g., Book 1, Case 5; Book 3, Case 3). Healing is equated with bodily *reintegration* in the Epidaurian narratives, as in the tale in which Asklepios removes and then replaces the head of a suppliant (101 [B1]). Later examples of this analogy between healing and reintegration include the passage in Aelius Aristides’s *Sacred Tales*, in which Asklepios is called “Saviour of the Whole” and said to have “put together and fastened not part of the body, but the whole frame, and has given it to us as a present, just as of old Prometheus is said to have fashioned man” (Aristides, *Sacred Tales* 42.7). Detailed discussion of these metaphors appears in my monograph (Hughes 2017a).
8. For instance, Graham explains how, during the treatment and healing of bodies at sanctuaries like the Pergamene Asklepeion, “the living bodies of suppliants became the physical manifestation of the otherwise intangible healing powers of the individual god. These divinely-animated bodies embodied and incorporated the inalienable essence of divine power in the same way that an anatomical votive embodied the complementary essence of a mortal suppliant” (2016, 58–59).
9. For a list and discussion of anatomical votives in antiquity, see Turfa 2005. The bronze miniatures are at cat. nos. 1–14.

10. These bronzes had, at some point, been collected inside a large clay vase that was inscribed around the rim with the dedication *Deae Sequana(e) Rufus donavit* ("Rufus gave to the Goddess Sequana," *CIL* XIII: 2865; Deyts 1994, 126, pl. 56.1).
11. Note: It may be the case that tiny votives in later periods simply have not survived, particularly since metal (the most frequently used material for miniatures) is prone to being melted down and reused for other purposes.
12. Existing studies of archaizing/archaistic sculpture focus almost exclusively on style. Mark Fullerton (1990) does touch briefly on the variable of size, noting that, "The vast majority of the Roman [archaistic] statues are approximately one meter in height or only slightly more. Only a very few of them are life-size or greater." He interprets this smaller size in functional terms, suggesting that most of these statues were used as garden decorations, although he proceeds to point out that "The Pompeii Artemis, however, reminds us that any of these may also have been religious" (1990, 197). Jerome J. Pollitt's musings on the potential symbolic meanings of the archaizing style are equally applicable to the tiny anatomicals discussed in the present chapter: "[The Archaizing style's] main function, at least in relief sculptures, seems to have been decorative. It conveys quaintness, charm, nostalgia for a lost era in the same way that figures in pilgrim costumes do in American commercial art. Whether this was its only appeal, or whether religious conservatism, the desire to evoke ancient, venerable forms, also played a role in it, is difficult to say" (Pollitt 1986, 178).
13. Bachelard ([1958] 1969, 155): "The tiny things we imagine simply take us back to childhood, to familiarity with toys and *the reality of toys*" (emphasis in the original). Note, however, that later on in this chapter he comments on the ability of enlargement to recapture the experience of a child looking: "The botanist's magnifying glass is youth recaptured. It gives him back the enlarging gaze of a child. With this glass, he returns to the garden, *où les enfants regardent grand* (where children see enlarged)" ([1958] 1969, 115). Cf. Stewart ([1993] 2007, 44): "The child continually enters here as a metaphor, perhaps not simply because the child is in some sense a miniature of the adult, but also because the world of childhood, limited in physical scope yet fantastic in content, presents in some ways a miniature and fictive chapter in each life history. . . . We imagine childhood as if it were at the other end of a tunnel, distanced, diminutive, and clearly framed."
14. For further exploration of the role of touch in ancient religion, see Hughes forthcoming.
15. See Warssenburg (1995, 430) for unworked amber in Archaic votive deposits.

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